This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

BD

Westminster Lectures

UC-NRLF
$B 285 998

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

BY

CANON MOYES, D.D.

YB 23006

LIBRARY
OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA.

Class

WESTMINSTER LECTURES

EDITED BY REV. FRANCIS AVELING, D.D.

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

BY THE

RIGHT REV. MGR. CANON MOYES, D.D.

LONDON AND EDINBURGH
SANDS & COMPANY

ST LOUIS, MO.
B. HERDER, 17 SOUTH BROADWAY

1906

BD555
M68

OCA

PREFACE

In the list of lectures delivered at Westminster Cathedral Hall, the first had for its subject the "Proofs for the Existence of God."

To deal exhaustively with the proofs as a whole would have required not a lecture but a treatise. What the reader will find in the pages that follow is not an attempt to treat the subject fully or technically, but an effort to indicate in a broad and general way, the lines on which it is thought that the proofs of God's existence may be conveniently stated.

It is a need of our rational nature to interrogate the things which we see, and to ask the reason of their existence. And if this is true with regard to any single phenomenon, or group of phenomena, it must be emphatically more so when we are face to face with the Universe as a whole. Hence the great question as to the origin and destiny of the Universe—the *whence*, the *why*, and the *whither*—is inextinguishable

16 1917

in the human mind. Man from the earliest times when he looked out with intelligent eyes upon the world, has never ceased to ask it. In the history of human thought, especially in its higher levels, as in the Greek civilisation, the best and ablest intellects of the race have been turned towards its solution. The acquired results of their labours have been happily handed down to us in the great schools of Scholastic philosophy, in which we have what has been aptly described as "the main line of European thought."[1] On the great question just alluded to, there is nothing in the "by-path" philosophies which is ever likely to invalidate their conclusions. The great work of St Thomas and the Schoolmen was not by any process of thought-spinning to originate a new philosophy, but rather to gather up into a formulated system all that was best and soundest in the Greek and Arabian schools which interpreted the thought of the ancient civilisations. Scholastic philosophy is thus much more a channel than a source. We esteem it, not merely because it is Thomistic or Scholastic, but because the great natural verities which it presents to us in terms of precision are the common property of

[1] Professor Caldecott of King's College, and H. R. M'Intosh, M.A., *Selections from the Literature of Theism*, p. 10.

mankind from the simple fact that they are the thought-out conclusions from the common sense of mankind, at work from the beginning upon the great problems of our origin and destiny. We prize it, because it comes as the heir of the ages, and represents the acquired results of the highest and clearest thinking in the life and history of the race. Metaphysical research has ever been its chief and absorbing aim, and its soundness therein remains untouched by the fact that in the physical domain, in which inductions upon ever-widening areas of facts must necessarily make their progressive report, many of its conclusions have been naturally long since evacuated. For this reason, most of the arguments set forth in the following pages have proceeded substantially on the traditional lines of the Scholastic philosophy, and to it, rather than to the somewhat free and feeble handling of those arguments by the writer, is due whatever worth or cogency they may be found to possess.

J. MOYES.

Note.—The few questions that were put to the lecturer on the occasion of the delivery of the lecture at London, Aberdeen, and Edinburgh have been dealt with in the text, and consequently are not included in an appendix.

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

"I CANNOT see God. But I see that He must exist; for if He did not, I could not see anything. There would not be anything for me to see, and I should not be here with eyes to see it." That would represent roughly the argument which arises in the mind of men as they gaze upon the world around them. It is built upon a conviction that the world and men have been made—that they did not make themselves—and that they have need of a God to have made them. But why should there be any such need? Why should the universe need to have been made at all? Might it not have existed always and from ever, with man (or his elements to be developed later on) as a part of it? Might it not exist of itself by its own forces and laws, without need of anything either to create or to sustain it?

The answer to this question is to be found in the proofs of the existence of God; and a statement of these, in very rough outline, is attempted in the following pages.

The proofs of God's existence are various and manifold. They are differently appreciated by different people, according to their mental taste or aptitude. A proof which is felt to be all that is clear and conclusive to some, may seem to be vague and unsatisfactory to others. For that reason it is well to consider here a number of proofs, leaving each mind to assimilate most the one which most appeals to it. No doubt, the considerations which make for the existence of God are innumerable, but the main proofs as traditionally handed down to us by those who have thought much upon the subject are comparatively few.

I.—*Argument from Motion.*

The first is drawn from the fact of Motion. Here we are at once face to face with a fact of cosmic magnitude. There is nothing which enters so much into the whole structure of the universe and is found so much everywhere and in everything, as Motion. On this point Science bears eloquent witness. Nature is truly described as an inexhaustible storehouse of wonders. Science—which is but another word for man discovering the laws and secrets of Nature—stands with the telescope in one hand

and the microscope in the other. The one turned upwards to scan the immeasurably great, reveals to us worlds upon worlds executing their marvellous dance in the realms of boundless space, and moving with unthinkable speed along paths so vast that their distance can only be counted by the years which a ray of their light would take to reach us. The other turned downwards to scrutinise the immeasurably small, reveals worlds within worlds of organic structures living and moving within a compass so small that thousands of them might be lost within the area of a pin-head. But all of them, great and small, from the remotest star to the tiniest microbe, are in motion, and fulfilling their part in the universal law of movement. Or, to look at the same truth from another point of view, motion is of all things in Nature the one which is most tellingly brought home to our senses. For instance, I raise my eyes to the sun shining at noonday, and my sight is filled and flooded with the dazzling brilliance of the sunlight. Have I seen it? Nothing so clearly. Science tells me that the light which I have seen is motion. I take my stand at the side of a mighty piece of ordnance—the 100-ton gun —while the shot is being fired, and my ears are, as it were, riven with the deafening report

Examples of Motion

which seemed to rip and rend the very atmosphere. Have I heard it? Nothing so plainly. Science tells me that the sound which I have heard is motion. I draw near to a heated furnace, and I put my hand into the flame until the pain is maddening. Have I felt it? Nothing so keenly. Science tells me that the heat which I felt is motion. Light, heat, sound, are but terms of motion, and these are the most palpably evident things in Nature.

So far, we are still in the outer and lower court of the world's wonders. The crowning phenomenon of the whole universe is Thought in the mind of man. As a marvel and mystery of power, both in the inscrutable subtlety of its process and in the far-reaching sweep of its operation and results, there is nothing in all the rest of the universe which can be compared to it. The wonders of the world outside of us are not nearly so great as the wonder which is inside of us. The works of Nature in the stars above us, and in the earth beneath us, and in the air around us, are immeasurably surpassed and transcended by the work which is wrought within the mind of every man whenever he uses his intelligence to think, or to know, or understand. But this use of the faculty means motion—not indeed in the sense of local motion, but motion really and

essentially in the sense of the exercise of a function, and the movement of powers into activity. From the farthest planet to the inmost recesses of our being, motion is everywhere.

What has our reason to say when it reads the open page of Nature, and beholds the universe vibrating and pulsating from end to end and from age to age with this ubiquitous law of motion?

It says with all possible plainness that where all is in motion, there must be a Prime-mover. That Prime-mover is what we call God.

The more we think of it the more we shall realise the necessity of the Prime-mover. And the more we shall feel that the absence of one is unthinkable.[1]

We can see that motion by its very essence must mean a procession or transition. It is not merely dynamic. It may be from place to place, or it may be from one state or condition to another. But it is from somewhere to somewhere, or from something to something. It is this which is the very condition of all progress and evolution. Nothing can ever move without

[1] That the Prime-mover must itself be unmoved, is obvious. If it were moved, it would postulate another being to move it, and it would not be the Prime-mover. An endless succession of movers and moved is unthinkable as existing in reality.

moving in some direction. We may think of that direction as a line, or we may think of it as a succession of states. When we turn to find its beginning, mentally, the line or succession might be extended indefinitely backwards. But in the real world there is no such thing as indefinite or illimitable extension. Nothing can ever escape the law of its constitution; and even as the part has its measure, so the whole must have its measure, however great it may be and beyond our reckoning. Hence the line must have an initial point, however far back we must go to find it. And the evolution must have a primary stage, however remote in the world's history that stage may be. In other words, there must have been a point at which, or a source from which, the world-motion was started, and there must therefore have been a Prime-mover to impart the movement and to conduct its evolution.

Need of Initial Point in all Succession or Series

This power which is behind all nature is God. As Prime-mover, He is the source by which all the manifold movement of nature is fed and sustained—and, as the Unmoved, He is the Constant which gives reason to all change, and the Eternal which gives reason to all time and succession. It is in Him that "we live, and move, and have our being."

II.—*Argument from Causality.*

A second proof is found in the nature of Causation.

In the universe we have a vast multitude of phenomena. It is quite clear that these are not isolated from, or independent of, one another. On the contrary, they are so connected that one brings about another, or makes it to be. This connection is called causation, and the thing which makes something else to be is called a cause, and the thing which is made to be is called an effect. If we ask why should things be thus connected, the answer is that they are so because there exists an underlying unity in the phenomena. Just as in mathematics or geometry, the explanation why one truth should be the reason of another truth is to be found in the intrinsic unity of all truth, so the explanation why one thing in this world should cause another to be, is a certain unity which binds together all nature. Effects flow from causes, and conclusions flow from principles or premisses, because each has unity as a basis to go upon. We may also note that there is not only unity, but—as we have seen in the motion proof—there is direction. Effects are found to proceed from causes, or con-

Unity of Nature the Basis of Causality

clusions from premisses, but not inversely; the causes do not come out of the effects, nor do the premisses come out of the conclusion. That means that in the unity there is *order* or procession, whether in things logical or ontological. Moreover, this order or procession is real; that is to say, it is due not merely to our minds or to any mental categories, but it exists in the nature of truth, and is the nature of the universe. A given degree of heat causes a rock to melt. Here is cause and effect, and with them there is also a fixed order or direction. It is the heat which causes the melting, and not the melting which causes the heat. Both the connection and the order or direction are real. The heat would have melted the rocks—in point of fact, it did so—even if no man were on the face of the earth to witness it, or no human mind were there to know it. Hence the relation between the heat and the melting could not be adequately expressed as mere *sequence*. For sequence would only mean that the one followed the other, and one might argue that the following was merely a matter of *then* and *after*, or a matter of time, and consequently something subjective or depending on the standpoint of the observer. The relation, based as it is on the real unity of nature, is obviously

Sequence an Inadequate Explanation

real; and the one really and naturally not only precedes the other, but brings about the other, and would do so if no human mind had ever existed. We may see this more clearly in a rather crude example. An express train has passed me at full speed, and I ask myself why do the carriages move along the line. Evidently the movement of the carriages is due to the movement of the locomotive, which in turn is due to the pressure of the steam, and so on, till we might pass along a line of ulterior causes. But if anyone told me that the explanation was to be found in sequence, it is clear that his explanation would not explain. For sequence means "following"; and to tell me that the carriages moved along the line because they followed the engine, or because the moving of the engine first takes place, and the movement of the carriages afterwards, is to tell me nothing, seeing that it is *why* they move or followed the engine is just what I want to know. If, on the other hand, my attention is drawn to the couplings, and I am shown that the cohesion is such that the movement of the engine causes a conveyance of energy and the movement of the carriages, I am at once put upon the true line of the solution. But the couplings and cohesion are real, and not subjective, and the relation between the movement of the engine and

that of the carriages is effective; or in other words, it is not mere sequence, but causation based upon an actual transference of energy or force.

It is exactly this real connection of phenomena which forms the foundation of all scientific knowledge and achievement. True Science is essentially the knowledge of things through their causes. Any one standing by a water-mill may observe the fact that the wheel turns round, and the fact that the water falls upon the wheel, and the fact that the water flows through the mill-race. Even a brute might see or observe such facts. But the man, and especially the man of science, by the law of his reason goes farther, and asks the reason why. He sees the cause of the rotation of the wheel in the weight-pressure of the flowing and falling water, and the cause of the flow and fall of the water in the law of gravity, and its liquid nature, and he will pursue his research of causes if need be into its chemical composition. But throughout he is building on the principle of causation and the real connection of cause and effect, and every induction which he makes from his observed facts assumes the unity or uniformity of nature by which the same causes in the same circumstances will produce the same effects. We may note that the mere unity of nature in itself is not

Direction as well as Unity

enough for his purpose. He must count upon a certain fixed order or direction existing in the phenomena, by which some produce others and are not produced by them. Without this principle of real connection and direction which we call causation, the whole work of science would come to a standstill, and all its achievements in the past would be reduced to guess-work. If causation be the explanatory principle of Nature, it must also be the effective principle of Nature; for the way in which things are known must ever at root be the way in which things themselves are made or done. The mind understands a thing in its cause because in the cause it, so to speak, witnesses the doing or the making of it. The logical and the ontological are but two ways of walking the same road, although the doing begins from one end and the knowing begins from the other, as the cause acts downwards to effect, while the mind investigates upwards from the effect to the cause. This very connection of phenomena which we have termed direction—the procession of effect from cause—is in itself a finger-post embedded in the very nature of things, pointing back to the source from which all things have proceeded. And here we reach the gist of our argument.

If the universe lies before us as a vast multitude of phenomena—if this multitude be not a

chaos, but a world held together by a marvellous law of unity, and at the same time marked by a not less marvellous law of direction or procession, as seen in the uniform but manifold concatenation of causes and effects (the origin no doubt of variety);—if we have as a result all that splendour of order which means classification in place and evolution in time, then at the root of all this unity and causation there must be One Cause, in which the unity finds its source, and from which the causation derives its original impulse and energy. That is only to say that when we have in the universe a vast chain of causes and effects, and when we travel up from cause to cause, and then again to an ulterior cause, the series existing as it does in reality cannot be indefinite, and we must eventually reach the First Cause, which is God. In doing so our minds are only logically or by knowledge travelling up the chain by which the Final Cause ontologically or by creation, so to speak, worked down. However long the chain, there must be an initial link, and above all there must be a Linker; or the chain had never been woven, nor its links put together in the admirable order in which we find them.

We have seen that the connection between phenomena is effective. It is not merely that one succeeds the other, but the one brings about the

other. That means that there must be a transference of energy, or a transformation, or at least a transition of energy, in the succession. Something must pass from one to another or from one in the other, or there would be no *trans* in the matter. Hence causation is necessarily a giving, and a cause is essentially a giver; and an effect is what is, and has what it has, just because it has received it from the cause. The molten rock equals all that caused the composition of the rock plus the heat which melted it. Hence the old scholastic axiom, which says that there is nothing in an effect which first of all did not exist (and in a higher manner) in its cause. That is only another way of saying that no one can give what it has not. If, then, the principle of causation teaches us that there is a First Cause from which proceeded all the effects which we see in the universe, and which is simply a series of givings, it teaches us also that there can be found in the universe nothing of being, viz., nothing real or good, which is not to be found first of all and most of all in the First Cause from which all originated. Hence if we find here amongst us such things as goodness, life, love, intelligence, the First Cause must be one which has all these attributes, and in the highest way, and is there-

Causation is giving

fore not only God, but a good, living, loving, intelligent, and therefore a Personal God. If our seeing, hearing, and understanding have come from Him, He must be one who Himself can see, hear, and understand.[1] That is an argument which appealed to man long before the Scholastics. "*He that planteth the ear, shall He not hear; and He that formed the eye, doth He not consider? He that chastiseth the nations, shall He not rebuke; He that teacheth men knowledge?*" (Ps. xciii.).

III.—*Argument from Necessity.*

Another proof is found in the nature of the world's existence. We feel there is wide difference between the ways in which things are felt to

[1] It would be superficial to discount the force of such an argument on the plea of its being anthropomorphism. As long as being comes down from cause to effect, it must be reasonable and logical to argue upwards from effect to cause, and to attribute *eminenter* to the cause whatever there is of the nature of being in the effect. That is only to assert the unity of Nature and the necessary harmony of the logical with the ontological, or knowledge with the nature of things. There is therefore so far a true anthropomorphism which attributes to God all, in the highest way, which is good in man. Anthropomorphism becomes false only when it departs from this law, and attributes to God not being, or what is good and positive, but the limitations, the falling short, or negation of being, which is evil or imperfection as found in man.

be true. For instance, it is true that two and two make four, and that the angles of a triangle equal two right angles. These statements are so true, that we know and feel that they never could have been otherwise. They are eternally and immutably and universally true, and a time, place, or condition in which they would not be true is utterly unthinkable. Because they are not only true, but *must* be true, they are called *necessary* truths. But there are other statements which as a matter of fact are true, but which we feel might have happened to be otherwise. For instance, it is true that you are reading this page at the present moment; but it might have easily happened that this page had never been written, or that you had never consented to read it. It is true that London is built on the Thames; but it is true not necessarily, but just because, as a fact, it happens to be so; because London might have been built elsewhere, or might never have been built at all. When things are true, not because they must be so, and cannot be otherwise, but because as a matter of fact they happen to be true, they are called happenings, or *contingent* truths. The distinction is a very plain one, and one which comes home to the common sense of every reasoning mind. We are all familiar with it, when we

Necessary and Contingent Truth

draw the distinction between principles and facts.

We apply it to the world around us, and ask ourselves to which class of truths does the universe belong? Clearly, it belongs to the happening or contingent class. No one feels for a moment that the statement that the universe exists, is on a par with the statement that two and two make four. The first is quite true, but it might have been otherwise. The second is necessary, and anything else would be impossible. Or, if we wish to push the inquiry farther, we may once more call to mind that law by which nothing can ever rise above its own composition and constitution. Every part, and every group of parts of the universe which we see is manifestly contingent. There is nothing in physical nature which might not have been, and the laws of Nature although *de facto* determined, fixed, and uniform, are not immutable like mathematical truths, in the sense that it would be impossible or unthinkable that they should ever have been otherwise. If the parts of the universe be thus contingent, it is clear that the whole must be likewise contingent, for there can be nothing in a whole which is not derived from the parts which constitute it. But once we know that the universe is contingent, we are in face of two

alternatives. Either the universe was made by someone—or, the universe always existed of itself. Now if we examine the second, we find that it will not hold good. That a necessary being should exist of itself and from all time, is intelligible. But that a contingent being—as we have seen the universe must be—should so exist, is incredible. In the first place, a being which existed of itself could not help itself from existing (since, to prevent itself from existing, it would have to exist before it existed—which would be absurd). If it cannot help itself from existing, and there is nothing else to help it, it would be a necessary being, and not a contingent being, for its non-existence would be an impossibility. In the second place, if a universe existed from all time, and were still contingent, we should have to believe that its existence was really nothing more than a mere happening or accident. In that case we should either have to seek something outside[1] of the universe, which determined the happening in favour of existence rather than the reverse, or we should have to leave the happening without any determining cause at all, either in itself or elsewhere. But that would be literally to ascribe the existence of

[1] If its existence were determined from within, it would be self-existent and necessary.

the whole universe to chance. Such a conclusion would be all that is unreasonable and unscientific. Reason asks the why of all existence, and tells us that the determinant of existence must be either inside the being which exists—in which case it is self-existent and necessary, and not contingent—or it is outside of it, in which case it is contingent and not self-existent or necessary. But to believe in existence without a determinant either within or without would be to refer the maximum of being to no reason whatever, and to land ourselves in the lowest depth of superstition; for superstition exactly consists in ascribing effects to non-existent causes; and the greater the effect so ascribed, the greater the superstition. True Science asks the causes of things, and takes as its ruling principle that nothing happens by chance. If it be unscientific to refer even the least part of the universe to chance, how much more unscientific would it be to refer the whole?

Throughout this argument we have been relying upon a fact of rational experience, namely, the distinct apprehension of necessary as contrasted with contingent truth. The verdict of our reason is that the one is not the other, and that the one *must* be, and cannot but be, while the other only is or may be, and might not be. There is the whole class of mathematical and

geometrical truths belonging to the one and the whole class of physical and historical truths belonging to the other. If the distinction could be shown not to exist in the nature of things (based on the root-difference between identity of being and mere fact, viz., between essence and action), but to be due merely to mental category, or a groove of the mind which apprehends, and not to anything in the truths apprehended, the argument would indeed be subverted. But in that case we should have to face the consequences. One of the plainest facts of mental experience—the sense of a necessary truth as different from a contingent one—would have been proved to be illusory and misleading. Our reason, in telling us that a whole set of truths is of a kind which must be, would have utterly deceived us, and in telling us that their contradictories were impossible, would have equally misled us. Our perception of the principle of identity would have been a mental illusion. If this were the case, it is difficult to see how we could ever afterwards trust to the report of experience or to the dictate of reason. All physical science is built on experience, and all mathematical science on reason, and precisely on reason perceiving this very principle of identity.

Causation not a Mental Category

If, then, the distinction which is the foundation of the argument were impugned, we could only feel that all modern science was based upon false and unreliable foundations.[1]

I may sum up the statement of this argument by saying that our reason, by refusing to confuse the things which it feels must be with those which are but might not be, has a sense of *necessity*. It thus enables us by demarcation to perceive the quality of contingency, or non-aseity —in other words, of createdness—which attaches to the universe, whether in its constituent parts or in its constituted whole. As such a universe must have for its existence a determinant which

[1] We cannot explain away the sense of necessary truth by holding the theory that it is merely due to an inherited tendency to conclude that what we have always seen to be must always have been ;—in other words, that our remote ancestors found by experience, so much and so often, that two and two made four, that their descendants gradually lost the power of perceiving that it could be otherwise, and thus acquired an inherited sense of necessity. Man from the beginning has been face to face to nature, and with a multitude of physical facts which have entered quite as constantly into his experience. He saw the grass grow, and the rivers flow, and the sun rise and set morning and evening, and presumably before he had learned to count that two and two made four. Yet, after thousands of years in perceiving these physical facts, we are not conscious of any sense of necessity as we undoubtedly are in dealing with necessary truths.

is not of itself, there must exist outside[1] of it a Being self-existent and necessary upon which it depends. This Being we call God, "upholding all things by the word of His power." (Heb. i. 3).

IV.—*Argument from Perfection.*

Another argument for the existence of God is based on the varying degrees of perfection in which things are found to consist. The world is not only marvellously complex, but the things in it differ from one another by being some higher and better than others. A plant is higher than a stone, a brute is higher than a plant, and man is higher than the brute. Moreover, qualities of strength, beauty, worth, are possessed by some in a higher measure as by others in a

[1] We say "outside" of it in the sense of being immeasurably distinct from it. The distance between God and His creation is not spatial but ontological. A concept of God in His heaven or away above the stars, is simply a very natural way of representing the transcendentalism of the Necessary Being. It has its due correction in the doctrine of His omnipresence. Some who lay stress upon His immanence, represent Him as the "groundwork" upon which all phenomena are projected. But obviously the concept of God as a groundwork is, if anything, more crude than that of a God beyond the stars. And a spatial God would be even more unthinkable than a sidereal one.

lower, and things present themselves in a scale of innumerable degrees of perfection. Thus all over the face of nature is written conspicuously the distinction of higher and lower and more and less. But, as higher and lower and more or less are plainly relative, there must in the nature of things be somewhere a standard in relation to which they become higher or better as they approximate, and lower or less as they become remote. For a relative without an absolute is unthinkable. The standard might indeed *de facto* be something having the highest degree of perfection actually acquired. As such, it would be only contingently absolute; but the real absolute would require to be one outside of which there could be no higher degree of perfection possible, otherwise it itself would be relative and not absolute. Hence the more-or-less-ness which we see in nature is in its measure an indication of the absolute perfection which is but another name for God, of whom all relative perfection in nature is but the fragmentary shadow, measuring its greatness or goodness by its approach to Him.

We may here note that certain writers of the Positivist school have insisted very much on the relativity of all knowledge. They regard all phenomena as so many symbols rather than

realities; and as the phenomena of the universe are innumerable and complex beyond all calculation, they argue that any conclusions or inductions founded upon any given set falling under our experience can never possess any absolute certainty, and can never be said to be true except in a sense which is not real but merely relative.

But if the contention were true, the real sufferers would not be the theists, but the scientists. It would mean that the whole work of science was based on unreality; that its acquired results were after all not acquired, but liable to be annulled at any time by a change of the relativity; and that men of scientific research were at best playing a game of counters, of which they themselves cannot even know the value. If that were the case, students of science might well have some reason for discouragement. On the other hand, the theist would feel that the more any one insisted that phenomena were mere symbols, and that the whole universe was a vast complexus of relativity, the more imperative would be the need of believing in an absolute. For relations do not hang in the air, and relativity without an absolute is inconceivable. The Absolute, which includes the reason of all reality, would be transcendental, and nothing

The Relativity of Phenomena

else than the God for whose existence the theist is contending; and the more a Positivist insists on the relativity of knowledge and phenomena, the more, in fact, he is found to insist on the ultimate truth of God's existence.

V.—*Argument of Design.*

A well-known proof for the existence of God is found in the fact of all nature bearing the impress of design, and this proof when carefully considered is felt to be more profound than at first sight it might seem to be.

It is undeniable that in nature we find the twofold feature — symmetry and construction. In plants and in crystals are to be found geometrical forms of marvellous symmetry. But much more wonderful is the fact that in nature there is not only structure, but construction, viz., the adjustment of part to part with a view to the fulfilling of a given purpose. No machine which has issued from the inventive genius of man—the printing-press, the telegraph, the phonograph — can compare in mechanical adaptation to the solar system, or the organism of a plant or an insect. Man's machines are cumbrous at the best, as they are fitted together from the outside. Nature's machines are ex-

quisite, because they are fitted together from the inside and by the forces which permeate them. How far do such facts as symmetry or adaptation of parts imply the action of an intelligent cause? The mere fact of symmetrical forms in nature might be traced to the uniform action of certain forces. And even adaptation of part to part might within certain limits be explained by the tendency of matter to adapt itself to the action of forces which shape it in the way best suited to the flow of their energy. If I see a round stick fitted exactly into a round hole in a hard substance, I may say that some intelligent artisan must have made the one to suit the other. But if a piece of wood were pressed by some continuous force against the round hole for a sufficiently long time, the mere pressure would make the stick to fit the hole, and we should have a case, not of design, but of force-adaptation. Why the matter of the wood suited the shaping pressure of the force, and why the wood and the force were there at all, working together, would still remain to be explained. If the result were not a mere round stick fitted to a round hole, but a wonderful and complex organism functioning by a co-ordination of manifold parts for a definite purpose, we should feel that the fact of mere

Self-Adaptation

force-adaptation would not go very far to account for the construction. Force is one thing, but the purpose or purposive action which characterises force is another. It is the latter which is so plain in nature, and which cries out for an explanation. Herein is the ulterior strength of the Argument of Design. I see a heron wading in the shallows, fishing for its prey. As I watch it at its work, I may observe that it presents all the evidences of having been designed by an intelligent Creator. There is the long beak, so admirably fitted to reach down far into the water for the food it seeks; the supple neck, which allows it to deliver the stroke with unerring precision; the long legs, enabling it to wade far out into the water where its food may be found. I might conclude that surely an intelligent Creator had given it such a beak, neck, and legs, precisely with the design that it should be able to live and to find its sustenance. But here I may stand corrected. A naturalist may point out to me that the bird has a history, and that it was not always shaped as I now see it. He may proceed to tell me what he believes to be the tale of its evolution. It was once very much like other birds. To begin with, its material organism was more or less plastic,

Example of Design—Argument

Evolutionist Explanation

and likely to be shaped by internal and external conditions. Then energy flows more fully into a member the more it is used, and the member is thus developed in size and strength. The bird, obliged to use its legs in walking and wading after its prey, and its beak in seizing it, gradually strengthened these members rather than others. Moreover, it would, by the law of heredity, transmit these characteristics to its offspring. The farther it would have to wade out into the water for a supply of food, the better chance its long legs and strong beak would give it of finding what it wanted. Those of its offspring which had the longest legs and strongest beaks would have more plentiful food, and would be the more likely to survive, to be strong and vigorous, and to have numerous progeny. Those which had not these advantages would be handicapped in the struggle for existence, and would become weak, would die out, and fail to have offspring. Thus by the mere self-shaping process of energy moulding the organism from within, and environment moulding it from without, and weeding out the unfitted, we may come to have the heron very much as we now find it. All that is but a very crude outline of the working of a theory with which we all are familiar.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Let us, then, for the moment accept the theory, and examine the process. There is at the very beginning a law of nutrition or self-preservation, by which the animal seeks to sustain the life within it by the quest of food which is outside of it. That is law number one. Then there is the law of plasticity of organism, by which its members can be moulded more or less by inward forces or outward environment. That is law number two. There is the law of invigoration, which sends most of the vital energy into a member that is most used, and least into that which is least used, so that the one becomes strengthened and developed, while the other becomes weakened or atrophied. That is law number three. There is the law of heredity, which transmits to the offspring even in a pronounced degree the character thus given to the organism of the parents. That is law number four. There is the law of survival of the fittest, which enables those who are adapted to the food-finding and environment to live and thrive and multiply, and weeds out and cuts off the succession of those who are not. That is law number five. We have thus five laws, each with its own specific drift and operation; laws which we may roughly name food-quest, member-moulding,

How the Explanation Enforces the Original Argument

energy-flow, heredity, and elimination of the weakest. And these five laws are not at all separate, isolated, or independent. On the contrary, they are adjusted so as to fit into one another, all moving together by a marvellous interadaptation and interaction to achieve one definite purpose—the production of a well-developed heron. Now that in itself—this mechanism of laws—is a combination far more wonderful, more eloquent in its need of a constructive intelligence, than any machine which has ever come under our observation. If I had under my hands a machine consisting of five main parts, which when put together worked harmoniously to effect a given object, I might admire indeed the skill of the inventor. But if I have before my eyes a construction in which it is no longer five dead parts, but five active laws of nature that are so deftly handled, interwoven, and combined, that by their interplay they are perpetually turning out a multitude of living types, with the ages for their working-day and the universe for their workshop, I may justly feel that here indeed is Design in the most telling and sublime sense of the word. Any mere adjustment of parts can never equal in ingenuity and skill that adjustment of laws which must

Mechanism of Parts and Mechanism of Laws

ever be a higher and subtler form of mechanism. If an ordinary machine requires an intelligent constructor to adapt its parts and fit them together, how much more this higher mechanism of laws cries out for the need of an intelligent Maker to set them in motion, to combine their action, to direct their operation to the definite purpose for which we see them so wonderfully working. The earthly mechanic plods with his material, which he shapes in such a way that the laws of nature may help him to achieve his object. The laws themselves are beyond his control, and he can only apply them. But the Mechanic who can handle the laws themselves and fit *them* to work together, even as the earthly mechanic fits his wheels and levers, must transcend in power and intelligence all human genius.

The argument of Design is not impaired, but rather strengthened and enhanced, by all that the naturalist can tell us of evolution. It means that the universe is a vast and complex mechanism, and that, not only for the marvellous adjustment of its parts, but above all, for the still more marvellous adjustment of its laws, it requires an Intelligent Adjuster.

Adjustment and Pre-conception

The need is one which we may see more clearly when we reflect on the connection that exists between con-

struction and preconception. For things have to exist mentally before they exist really, whenever they have to be put into any kind of order.

Let us suppose that we have before us a mechanism of a given number of pieces. It is clear that we have not merely these pieces, but a special quality attaching to each, by which they fit into one another in order to work for a definite object. It is equally clear that the pieces have received this quality, their special make and shape, in view of the object to be attained. That implies that they must have been seen and adjusted before they were actually made, else there is no guiding principle on which the adjustment could have been directed. The only medium in which things can be seen or shaped before they come into real existence, is an intelligent mind. It alone can foresee the object and mentally picture the pieces and their adjustment, and thus give to them the shape which is required for the purpose in view.

If it were otherwise, we should have to suppose that the pieces shaped themselves by some blind and unconscious tendency inherent in themselves; and what is stranger still, that while the tendency was thus blind and unconscious, and able neither to see nor know what it was aiming at, it achieved its purpose with unerring precision

and unrivalled success. Such a reason would be worse than none. We feel that such a belief would be degrading, for it attributes all that is highest and best in the universe to a cause which is blind and ignorant.[1] It would be futile to veil the real meaning of the belief by using such terms as "Nature" or "Laws of Nature," as if these were personifications. Nature in so far as it acts, means certain forces, and laws of nature mean nothing more than the uniform mode in which the forces act. While these forces are non-intelligent they can neither see, nor know, nor understand, and therefore no amount of rhetoric would ever conceal the poverty and hopeless inadequacy of the position by which a blind and ignorant force is made to stand as the reason of the construction of plants and of planets, and of achievements in ingenuity and contriving skill immeasurably transcending all the wisdom and most brilliant genius of mankind. To say that a magnificent mechanism like the universe had no other author than an unconscious force, is not to give to a reason, but rather in despite of all reason, to impute wonders of foresight to that which sees

[1] To say that intelligence was latent in the original forces, and afterwards developed, would not in the least help in the solution. For it was not the developed intelligence as we see it in man that shaped the universe, and the intelligence in its latent forces could not see or understand.

not, and wonders of contrivance to that which knows not. To accept such a contradiction requires more credulity than most men are found to possess. As an explanation of the universe, it not only fails to explain, but gives us instead a genesis of the greater out of the less, and of things out of their contradictories, which is in itself something far more difficult than the original problem. As a creed, it seems to be in reality something harder to believe than any of the dogmas of revealed religion.

As we cannot accept this blindfolded know-nothing wonder-worker called Force as the contriver of the glorious mechanism of the universe, we conclude that just because it is a mechanism it must have had an intelligent Maker. For construction and adjustment of parts by their nature imply preconception in a thinking mind, and preconception implies intelligence.

To construct something is something more than to know something. If it is certain that it requires intelligence, and a high degree of it, to know the solar system, or the organism of a plant or an insect, much more must intelligence have been needed to produce it and to give knowledge so much to work upon. What mind alone can study, mind alone can have

constructed to be studied. Men of science, astronomers and physicists, by the very measure of their genius, which we gratefully admire, are themselves the best refutation of the conclusions of some amongst their number, who ascribe the existence of the world to a cause immeasurably less intelligent than themselves. Hence we have to choose between belief in an Intelligent Creator —the most simple and rational solution, and the one most in harmony with the workings of our own intelligent nature—or to descend to the bathos of putting at the origin and in supreme control of all things a force which can neither see, nor hear, or understand—an alternative which, as we have said, seems to us the apotheosis of blindness and ignorance. That which is at the beginning of all things, and which contains the reason of all things, is God, by whatever name we may choose to call it. If we are to have a God —and by the force of the definition we must have one—it is neither good nor reasonable, nor in keeping with our nature or with His handiwork, that we should have a blind one.

VI.—*Argument from Law or Conscience.*

The argument which is sought in the nature of Law, in the deeper sense of the word, may be

stated as follows. Our reason tells us that certain things are true or false. Our conscience—which is our reason in a certain aspect—tells us that certain things are right or wrong. Moreover we feel that this distinction is not arbitrary or conventional, but is rooted in the nature of things, and is therefore a law in the fundamental sense of the term. We know, for instance, not only that it is true that two and two make four, but that it is true in all times, in all conditions, and in all places, just as the statement that two and two make five would be false in the same manner. There is thus a law of truth as against falsehood, which is universal and everlasting. It is likewise immutable, and absolutely independent of man's consent. If all the nations of the world agreed to-morrow in a resolution by unanimous consent that in future two and two should make five, or anything else than four, we know that two and two would continue to make four just as it did from all time, and as it will do for all eternity. In like manner, there is a law of right as against wrong, which in its ultimate principle is immutable, eternal, and independent of human consent. An ethical flaw, like a mathematical one, is a violation of a principle which is in the nature of things above and beyond all human control or adaptation. If, then, there is thus written in our rational nature

a law of Truth and Falsehood, and a law of Right and Wrong—laws which are not of our making—there must be a Lawgiver who made them, and the Lawgiver must be like His law, necessary, eternal, and immutable. For law, above all things—even in its political sense, but much more in its natural sense—is the highest expression of order and purpose, and therefore of intelligence. There can be no law without a Lawgiver, and the Lawgiver must Himself be intelligent, if His law appeals to our intelligence.

The Law and the Lawgiver

It is sometimes said that our conscience is the revealer of God, and that it is God's voice within us. That is true in the sense that conscience is the name which we give to our reason when applied to matters of right and wrong (for conscience is not a distinct faculty from the intellect, and all its perceptions, in so far as it perceives at all, cannot be other than intellectual), and in so far as it is the voice of our reasonable nature which God has given us, it is the voice of God. But it is strictly the revealer, not directly of God, but of the "ought," or the duties which we owe to God. Naturally there would be no "ought" or duty at all, unless there was a righteous-

The Dictate of Conscience not a Revealer but a Resultant of Perception of God's Existence

ness or God at the end of it. But the perception of righteousness—or of God, who is concrete righteousness—is the work of reason; and when reason sees it, and, consequently, the practical "ought" or "ought not" which arises therefrom, we call it conscience. God or righteousness in some shape has first of all to be reached by reason before reason, which we call conscience, can dictate its practical judgement. Conscience thus postulates God or goodness rather than reveals them. Hence the revealer of God in the natural order is the light of reason, as the Vatican Council most opportunely declared. Reason may apprehend the existence of God in two ways—either by looking back to Him as the First Cause, or looking forward to Him as the Last End. The one tells us that we were made *by* Him, the other tells that us we were made *for* Him. It is out of this second or final perception—viz., that we are made for goodness, or for God as our End—that comes the judgement of reason of what is or is not in harmony with our reaching it—God's pleasure or displeasure as we call it—and the sense of sin or justice with the practical "ought" or dictate which we name conscience.

The distinction has its importance in the fact that the practical judgement of conscience takes

its direction from a speculative judgement of reason which precedes it. And because reason, while infallible in its first principles, is not so in its deductions, we have the case of what is known as false conscience. A man may be heard to say that he cannot conscientiously believe in transubstantiation. But it is not in the least his conscience which judges of the doctrine. His conscience cannot tell him whether transubstantiation is true, any more than it can tell him whether Free Trade or Protection is the better policy. He exercises on that matter his individual reason—his private judgement—to see whether it is true or not, and his reason in formulating conclusions has to depend on the apprehension of facts, which may or may not be adequate, and as a result he may or may not arrive at an accurate decision. Having arrived at the conclusion that transubstantiation is not true, his conscience proceeds to make its practical dictate, namely, that he ought not to believe or profess a doctrine which he judges to be untrue. This latter part is alone the voice of conscience, and that voice remains always true and must always be followed. But the conclusion to which he applies it, namely, that the doctrine of transubstantiation is untrue, is not at all the voice of conscience, but that of his own fallible

private judgement. The sense of right and wrong—of the duty of doing what God wills, or what is Godward or right, and of avoiding what God forbids, or what is ungodward or wrong, is not so much the cause as the resultant, and not so much the premiss as the conclusion of the reason perceiving that God is, and that certain actions make for or make against Him. The light of reason, in its true domain and in its primary principles, whether turned backward to God as our First Beginning in the revelation of our origin, or forward to God as our Last End in the revelation of our duty, remains the true Schekinah of the presence of God—the Alpha and Omega within us.

VII.—*Ontological Argument.*

The ontological proofs for the existence of God are generally felt to be somewhat abstruse and profound, but by the minds to which they appeal—Hegel's amongst others—they have been found in the long-run to be the most convincing and the most satisfactory. The one which I indicate here is not the well-known argument of St Anselm, but rather a line of thought which may serve at least to make more clear the unity and necessity of transcendental being, and of

the logical connection which exists between the concept of being and the attributes of God.

We have already seen in dealing with the proof which is drawn from perfection, that our reason recognises a clear distinction between necessary and contingent truths—for instance, between such a truth as two and two making four, and the truth that William of Normandy invaded this country. The one is and must be, and could not be otherwise. The other is and may be, but might have been otherwise. With this distinction before us, we turn our minds to what we feel to be the most fundamental of all concepts—that of *being*. Because it is the bed-rock of thought, we cannot define it, and can only explain it by saying that Being is that which is. Its opposite is the Nothing or *nihilum*, that which is not.

The Idea of Being

If we reflect upon the meaning of these two terms, we shall feel that the Nothing or the *nihilum* could not exist. It would contradict itself if it did. A state of absolute nothingness is impossible. As it has been truly said, if nothingness had existed even for an instant, nothing could ever have existed afterwards. If, then, the nothing never could have existed, there must be something which always existed. And this something, whatever it may be, must always have

been, or else the nothing would have been, which is impossible. Hence there is a sense in which being is necessary; for to say that something *must* be, or cannot but have been, is to say in other words that it is a necessary being.

Here we have to guard against any mere play upon words. It might be said that what we have found by our reflection is the truth, that something or other must always have been, but not that the being itself is a necessary one; or, to put it otherwise, it is the truth that is necessary, not the being.

But if we reflect still further we shall find that after all the one implies the other.

For we know that since nothingness never could have been, something (we do not say what) always must have been in existence. If that something had the reason of its existence in itself—in other words, if it were self-existent—it would certainly be a necessary being, for by its very condition, its essence and existence would be the same, and it could not help existing. On the other hand, if the something which always existed had not the reason of its existence in itself, it must have had it in something else which had. Then this something else would be the self-existent and necessary being. Thus in any case, if the nothingness be excluded, as it must be, we can-

not escape from the admission of a necessary being.

Analysis of Attributes

Here it might be said that the necessary being which we have found is nothing more than being in general, or let us say, to put it concretely, the Universe.

Whether that is so or not, we may try to find out by an analysis.

Let us call the being which we have been considering X. It includes simply that being which is necessitated by the inevitable exclusion of the nothingness.

1. We have seen that X must be, or the nothingness would be, and therefore X is a necessary being.

2. But as the nothingness not only cannot be, but never could have been, and never can be, it is clear that X not only must be, but must always have been, and must always be. X therefore is a being which has no beginning, and no end—which ever was, is, and ever shall be. In other words, it is eternal.

3. As the very meaning of X is that it is being which is logically forced upon us by the fact that nothingness could not exist, and as it is thus logically born by the exclusion of nothingness, it follows that it must contain all that is outside of nothingness, and that nothingness is

the only limit of its being. That is only to say that it contains the fulness of being, that its being is limitless, or Infinite. Since outside of it nothing can ever be, it contains the "all that is or ever can be," which is exactly the definition of the Infinite being.

4. As X is infinite, it is evidently one. By its very meaning, outside of it is nothingness, and therefore no other necessary being but it can exist. It has that outside oneness which means no other than one, or extrinsic unity.

5. As X is infinite, it is also simple or devoid of parts; that is, it has also inside oneness, or intrinsic unity. If X were composite, and so had parts, the parts would by the very fact have a number, and that number, at least in thought, could be added to. A greater than X could therefore be conceived and therefore possible, and X would not be infinite, and it would not be, as we have seen, the being "outside of which nothing can be." X is, therefore, simple by the fact of being infinite.

6. We have already seen that X is eternal; that as a being which must be, it must always have been, is, and must always be. Its duration is Infinite or eternal. There is no conceivable instant in which it was not (or in that time the nothingness would have been). But infinite or

eternal duration has no parts. If it had any such parts, their number could be added to, and it could be conceived as greater than it is. Hence X's existence is not one of successive time, but of eternity. As a necessary and eternal being it has not to wait until to-morrow for a part of its existence. Its being is the eternal now, without instants of succession in the past or future. Hence X is immutable, for change implies time, or succession of states or instants, since not even a Necessary and Infinite being can be and not be something at the same time.

Thus, from the concept of being, and by the contrast and inevitable exclusion of nothingness or the *nihilum*, there seems to be reasonably evolved before our minds a Being which is necessary, or self-existent, Eternal, Infinite, One Simple and Immutable. That Being certainly cannot be the universe around us, which has time, and change, and composition, and finiteness written so plainly all over its constitution. It is all that the universe is not, and the universe is all that it is not. And we may note that if anything were wanted to emphasise the abyssmal difference between them, and to prove that the universe cannot be the self-existent being which our reason demands, it would surely be

the doctrine of evolution. By its very concept, evolution postulates and insists upon limitation, number, succession, change; all of which are loud-voiced in declaring that the universe which they stamp cannot be the one which is Infinite, One Simple, Immutable, and Eternal, as the Being which is necessary must be.

It may be urged that in following this line of thought we merely allow ourselves to become the sport of our own dialectics, and that at the outset we have begged our conclusions in the formulation of our definitions, and that when we started with a being, which is logically alone with the *nihilum*, we practically secured all that we wanted, and the rest of the process has been mere thought-spinning and word-juggling, without adding any fresh truth to our original postulate.

But after all, we may feel it is not a very great logical sin to have at the end of our reasoning nothing in our conclusions which was not contained in, and did not come out of, our original premisses. Were it otherwise, we might have some cause for misgiving. And as to the premisses, or definitions of being and nothingness, if they can be called definitions, it would be futile to imagine that they can be treated as arbitrary assumptions, since they are concepts which lie at the root of all reality, and appeal as such to the

common sense of mankind. They are not certainly of our making, but are founded in the nature of things.

A more serious objection, albeit one which is never likely to have much grip on men of vigorous common sense, is that all such reasoning may hold good in the realm of mind, but there is no bridge between the ideal and the real, and therefore no means of being certain that any reality corresponds to our reasoning.

The plain answer to this contention, and to the systems of philosophy which lie behind it, must ever be that if knowledge is to be knowledge at all it must be knowledge by means of our minds, and that the first postulate of all knowledge must be that our minds are valid and veracious instruments for reaching the realities that lie outside of us. If they are not, we close the only door to knowledge of any kind, for we have no other instruments with which we can work, and if they are unreliable, their report as to our thoughts, quite as much as to things outside of us, would not be worth consideration. No man can jump out of his subjectivity in order to verify his impressions as to exterior realities, nor would it in the least serve his purpose even if he could, seeing that he would have left behind him his

The necessary Postulate of all Knowledge

mental apparatus, by which alone he could carry out the verification. Any system of epistemology which enters on a critique not merely of the mental process, but of the mental instrument itself, must be self-refuted, since it uses the very instrument which it criticises in order to make the criticism, and it is not easy to see how the criticism can ever be more trustworthy than the instrument which the critic has used to make it.

But in truth, as our minds are the only instruments by which we can know realities, whether inside or outside of us, we must be content to postulate their validity, or to know nothing, and condemn ourselves to a state of scepticism and ignorance. Men of common sense refuse to blow out the light and sit in the dark just because there is no absolute proof of the veracity of their eyesight.

The bridge between the Real and Ideal

To those that have once reached the truth of the Necessary Being, there is no need to say that in It they have found the bridge between their minds and exterior realities. Our minds are by their very nature active images of the Divine mind. That is why they are intelligent. Things outside of us are also by their very nature passive images of the Divine Reality. That is why they are intelligible. The minds that think and the things

that are thought about are both analogues of the Divine Absolute, and things which are analogical to the same thing are analogical to one another. Thus between minds and objects there is an analogical bond which is necessary and ontological, and as such sure and veracious, and this is the bridge which He who is at once the Divine Ideality and Reality has built between the two.

It is precisely this bond or bridge which in a special way enforces the argument of Design. There is no mechanism—not even that of the solar system—which can be compared to that of the human mind as an instrument of thought. In an ordinary machine we admire the adjustment of part to part. Higher still is that marvellous adaptation in nature by which law is adjusted to law. But highest of all and most marvellous of all in the mechanism of the Universe is that ineffable adaptation which has been wrought between the minds that are ever thinking and their objects that are ever thought upon — between the mentalities and the realities—between the intelligences and the intelligibilities—between thoughts and things—so that as often as we observe, things are projected into thought, and as often as we construct, thoughts are projected into things, and the two worlds of mind and matter are forever clasped and interwoven in the union of the

Knowing and the Known. It is this adjustment of thoughts and things which is the design *par excellence*, and more eloquently than all others it demands the need of an Adjuster, and one who in Himself is Mind and Reality, and of whom all Intelligence and Intelligibility wedded here below are but the reflect and the likeness. It is in His absolute and transcendental Unity, containing the reason of all things—and not in our poor fragmentary universe of things here below—that we find the term of the true Monism with which our unity-loving souls crave to finish up the synthesis of all that we are and all that we know. He is the Eternal Monos. "*I am the First, and I am the Last, and besides Me there is no God*" (Isaias xliv. 6).

VIII.—*Æsthetic Argument.*

One of the most palpable facts of human experience is that there are things which are beautiful, and that it gives joy to behold them. It may be a majestic landscape, or a masterpiece of painting or sculpture or of musical composition, but we feel that in such things there is beauty, and that it elevates us, and gladdens us, and draws our souls towards it. Let us ask the reason why. If we analyse the

idea of beauty, it is evident that it is the combination of two things—Unity and Variety. If for variety, we were to say wealth of being, or wealth of formal entity, we should express our meaning more fully and more precisely. The most beautiful being is that in which the greatest variety, viz., the greatest amount of being (not mere quantitative but qualitative or formal being) is held together or co-ordinated in the closest degree of unity. Here we can see at once why beautiful things give joy. If an amount of being were altogether devoid of unity, it would be chaos, and beyond the reach of our minds. It would be intangible or unintelligible. It is just by the unity which is in a thing that it is mentally get-at-able. The mind itself is an active unity—active with the highest kind of activity which is life, and the highest kind of life, which is intelligence. Intelligence is living unity with the power of reading unity, and all things by their unity. We try to express all that by the single word *spirit*. Because it is living unity it has a mysterious way of getting into things by means of *their* unity, and by a vital act seeing them in itself, and that is the process which we call knowing or understanding. It follows that the more unity there is in a thing, the more clearly and readily the mind understands it. It is by

unifications, or general ideas—grasps of unity—that we gain our knowledge, sometimes chaining the unities as when we syllogise, or at other times simply contemplating their oneness by an act of intuition. In like manner, when an object which is beautiful comes before us, we apprehend it and get it into our souls by means of its unity, and the greater the measure of its unity, the clearer will be the apprehension. The greater the variety or wealth of being which is brought under the unity, the greater will be the soul-grasp, and consequently the greater the joy of the soul. For the two things which the soul loves and feeds upon are Unity and Being—or I ought rather to say, Being through Unity. It itself is Spirit or Unity-Being, and it delights in finding that which is the likeness of itself. It is, so to speak, a glimpse of its own beauty. The more intense the unity, and the more there is of variety, or muchness of being, the greater its delight becomes. Hence beauty gives joy owing to its very kinship to the soul. The unity, or self-compatibility which is inherent in things by which we understand them, or by which they are thinkable, is their "thinkable quality," or *species intelligibilis*, and it is by it that we grasp or enter into them and feel all the joy of the beautiful and the true.

There is thus a very close connection between intelligence and the appreciation of the beautiful. If I place a beautiful masterpiece of some great painter before a dog, little notice will paid to it. If I place it before a savage, endowed with an intelligence, lacking in cultivation perhaps, but therefore radically differing from the brute, the painting may be admired, but possibly not so much as the gilt frame. The æsthetic power to admire is there, but it may not be evoked by the painting in question. If I put it before a person who is not indeed a savage, but is ignorant or uncultivated, he may find pleasure in the work of art, but possibly not so much as in some brightly coloured print which would appeal more to unformed taste. If I put it before some one of high intelligence and artistic culture, the beauty of the painting will be felt and appreciated. Thus the conception of beauty, once found in human intelligence, is seen to transcend the sensible apprehension of the mere brute, and at the same time to be more recognised and relished the higher we ascend in the scale of cultured and refined mind. If upon a desert island I pick up a scrap of paper upon which a few words are written, I know that some intelligent being must have been the writer. Why? Because, if it is only by intelligence that I can read the words,

much more must it be only by intelligence that the words can have been written for me to read them. The writing, in fact, is the appeal which one intelligence makes to another. If, then, beauty is stamped so clearly, so widely, so magnificently upon the universe, and if it speaks so intensely to the depths of the human soul, it is evident that even as intelligence is needed to appreciate it, so intelligence must have been needed to put it there to be appreciated. In other words, if beauty be a handwriting upon the open page of the universe, which only intelligence can read, it must also be one which only intelligence can have written. All beauty is the appeal to our intelligence from the Supreme Intelligence —the Infinite whose oneness is the source of all unity, whether thinking or thinkable, and whose fulness of being is the source of all wealth of variety. It is the shadow of the Infinite beauty cast upon creation, and the only reason why one thing is more beautiful than another is because it has more of the joy-giving likeness of God.

In the foregoing arguments I have attempted to sketch, at least in bald outline, some of the reasons which help to convince us of the existence of God. But happily, God, like light, is His own revealer, and He, both by the light of

reason and the light of His own life, which we call grace, writes His witness vitally in the soul of man. That testimony, just because it is vital, is more than can be put into words, or formulated in the set terms of an argument. Also, because it is vital, and supernaturally vital, it will require not mere intellectual capacity, but qualities of heart which are in harmony with God, to receive it. No doubt, men will always feel about their Maker more than they can easily utter, but as in the case of the crystal and the sunlight, it is inevitable that how much or how little they may feel will depend upon the state of the soul, and its spiritual eyesight or power to assimilate the light will be in the measure of its moral nearness to the light and to the Light-giver.

Spiritual Experience

In the trend of modern thought much value is rightly attached to the evidential value of experience. It is upon experience that modern science takes its stand, and carries from triumph to triumph the magnificent work which it accomplishes for the well-being of mankind. But physical experience is naturally limited to physical phenomena, and modern science does its work wearing spectacles, which by their very nature cannot carry beyond secondary causes. To all the experience of sense-perception, the

First Cause must remain invisible and inaccessible. God cannot be caught in the tests of the laboratory any more than He can be formulated on the blackboard. And that not because He is not, but precisely because He is, and is what He is and must be. A God that could be so detected by sense, or compressed into a finite formula, would be within measurable distance of us, and upon the upper end of the same intellectual plane as ourselves—He would certainly not be the First Cause, would not be the Necessary Being, would not be transcendental—all of which are but so many ways of saying that He would not be God at all. When, therefore, certain men of science tell us that in all their chemical or biological researches they have failed to find the faintest trace of a Supreme Being, we can only say that no one in possession of their senses ever imagined that they would or could, and that their testimony can only be welcome to us as their contribution, helping us in their way, to prove the transcendentalism, or what Scripture calls the invisibility of the King of the Ages —a quality which we feel to be one of the most necessary in the elements which enter into the concept of God.

Life, however, is broader than the laboratory or the blackboard, and it would be surely a poor

and narrow view of experience to limit it to one or the other. We have all in our own hearts a higher and wider theatre of experience. We have there, written in the life-record, all that we have felt of God working within us, of all God's dealing with us, of all that God has done for us in the great crises of our life, in hours of trial, temptation, sorrow, or of happiness, in the shade and shine of the years through which we have passed. We feel, more profoundly than words could utter, all that He has been to us, and all that we have been to Him. If experience be the best foundation of our knowledge, such life-experience written in the depths of our souls is to us the highest form of experience, and certainly one more telling, more intimate, and more secure than any which is likely to be found within the walls of the laboratory. If it were but the experience of a single soul, its evidence to that soul would be all-sufficient. But what we feel is felt not less intensely by millions of human hearts around us; has been felt by millions from generation to generation in the inner—and what, after all, is the more real—history of mankind. With this volume of testimony, soul-deep and world-wide, within us and around us, we can rest secure in the consciousness of our God, and read in Him the glad meaning of our lives here,

and the glorious meaning of our lives hereafter, when the eyes, from which have been wiped away all earthly tears, shall "*see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living*" (Ps. xxvi. 13).

APPENDIX

WORKS ON THEISM THAT MAY BE CONSULTED

St Thomas Aquinas.—*Summa Theologiæ.*
Summa Contra Gentiles.
Bernard Bœdder.—*Theologia Rationalis.*
Stonyhurst Manuals.—*Natural Theology.*
First Principles.
L. von Hammerstein.—*Foundations of Faith.*
R. Clarke.—*Dialogue on the Existence of God.*
S. Reinstadler.—*Elementa Philosophiæ Scholasticæ.*
Benedict Lorenzelli.—*Philosophiæ Theoreticæ Institutiones.*
Cardinal Manning.—*Religio Viatoris.*
Professor Flint.—*Theism; Anti-Theistic Theories.*
Professor Caldecott.—*The Philosophy of Religion.*
Rev. C. Harris.—*Pro Fide.*

PRINTED BY
OLIVER AND BOYD
EDINBURGH

CALIF

14 DAY USE
RETURN TO DESK FROM WHICH BORROWED

LOAN DEPT.

This book is due on the last date stamped below, or on the date to which renewed.
Renewed books are subject to immediate recall.

22Apr'58WW

REC'D LD
APR 21 1958

25Jan'60MW
REC'D LD
JAN 18 1960

2 JUL '64M0
REC'D LD
JUL 1 '64-9 AM

LD 21A-50m-8,'57
(C8481s10)476B

General Library
University of California
Berkeley

YB 23006